

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

WATER

Matters

Fall 2006



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GET TO KNOW US!

Stay informed with this quarterly update from the South Florida Water Management District, protector of the region's water resources.



■ We're Turning Dirt!

Ecosystem restoration construction speeds along

■ Everglades Water Quality

Florida's cleanup actions go beyond requirements

■ Many Missions

We are the South Florida Water Management District

■ Partners in Progress

How you can help

INSIDE

Governor Jeb Bush joined local, state and federal leaders in August to break ground on the expansive Acceler8 Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir as part of the massive effort to restore America's Everglades. Since February 2006, the state has expanded three Everglades Agricultural Area treatment wetlands and launched construction on the C-43 Caloosahatchee West Storage Reservoir, the C-44 St. Lucie Canal Reservoir/Stormwater Treatment Area and the Water Preserve Area/Acme Basin B Discharge Project.



The South Florida Water Management District and our partners are taking aggressive action in restoring the interconnected Everglades. The state's bold and aggressive Lake Okeechobee & Estuary Recovery Plan is fast-tracking five key projects to reduce pollutants entering our pr has returned to the Kissimmee to continue the effort to restore the river and habitat-rich floodplain.

Everglades progress takes several giant steps forward

FIVE CRITICAL ACCELER8 RESTORATION PROJECTS BREAK GROUND THIS YEAR

2006 is proving to be a very good year for Everglades restoration. Have you noticed? From the halls of Congress to the chambers of county commissions, Everglades projects continue to get the green light and move forward at an aggressive pace.

Five groundbreakings this year alone have launched construction on critical reservoirs and treatment wetlands that will improve the Everglades ecosystem, our coastal estuaries and Lake Okeechobee. These projects are part of the state's Acceler8 initiative, an action plan for stepping up the pace on eight key restoration projects.

Governor Jeb Bush led the groundbreaking in August for Acceler8's largest project: an enormous water storage reservoir in the Everglades Agricultural Area south of Lake Okeechobee. Fittingly called Acceler8's flagship, the new reservoir will hold 62 billion gallons of water – the volume of 100,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools – capturing flood-control releases from Lake Okeechobee as well as stormwater runoff in the region.

"Florida is keeping its promise to restore the River of Grass and protect this national treasure," said Governor Bush. "By constructing this massive

water storage system, we can better control water releases, restore wildlife habitat and protect the state's estuaries."

At 25 square miles, the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir project will be able to do all that, and more. One of the most expansive reservoirs in the world, its benefits will be felt throughout southern Florida, reducing ecologically damaging freshwater flows to the brackish east and west coast estuaries, lowering water levels in Lake Okeechobee and improving the timing and flow of water into the Everglades.

STATE, LOCAL PARTNERS KEEP PACE WITH SUCCESS

Support at the city and county level has been essential to progress in Everglades restoration. Earlier this year, Martin County contributed \$27.4 million to help buy land for an Acceler8 storage reservoir and treatment wetland now being built near the east coast. Hendry County is partnering in workforce development for construction of an Acceler8 storage reservoir near the west coast, ensuring that people and local businesses thrive at the same time we invest in the environment.

Snowy Egret





ecosystem. In addition to *Acceler8*, the protected water bodies. Heavy equipment

“The magnitude of this project is awe-inspiring, yet our commitment to Everglades restoration is just as big. The Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir is one of many outstanding projects, and they are all aimed at bringing environmental benefits to the Everglades ecosystem as soon as possible.”

– Kevin McCarty

South Florida Water Management District
Governing Board Chairman

Support in Tallahassee has been essential. Governor Jeb Bush guided the efforts to accelerate critical Everglades projects with specialized funding, ensuring that our momentum would not be slowed. State legislators have supported these initiatives, this year alone budgeting more than \$160 million for continued restoration of the Everglades and Lake Okeechobee.

“Florida’s financial commitment to water resources is unmatched,” Governor Bush said at the Everglades Agricultural Area reservoir groundbreaking. The state has invested \$1.7 billion toward *Acceler8*, \$1.2 billion toward Everglades water quality improvements and \$200 million toward Lake Okeechobee, with \$3.2 billion committed to Everglades restoration by the end of the decade.

FEDERAL SUPPORT PICKS UP STRIDE

In the U.S. Congress, the long-awaited Water Resources Development Act was approved by the Senate this summer, underscoring the commitment of our federal partners. WRDA’s passage moves construction of the \$1.2 billion Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan’s Indian River Lagoon South restoration project and *Acceler8*’s \$342 million Picayune Strand restoration project an important step closer to implementation.

Of course, there is still much work to do. Appropriation of federal funds is still needed; land for projects must still be purchased; engineering designs need public input and approval for construction. No single effort alone will achieve restoration goals, but people and agencies and projects working together will. The year 2006 is demonstrating what a powerful formula that is for success.

We are the South Florida Water Management District

Did you know that the South Florida Water Management District makes it possible for you – and the 7 million people who also call central and southern Florida home – to live and work safely here by managing and protecting our water resources? While flood control is the core of our mission, we safeguard the region’s water quality and water supply for people and the environment for today and for the future. We also restore and protect our natural systems, including America’s Everglades.



What about Everglades water quality?

Florida's actions go beyond cleanup requirements

Controlling the timing and amount of water flowing into Everglades wetlands is vital to restoration success. But the quality of that water is critically important, too. That’s because the Everglades is naturally a low-nutrient ecosystem. It cannot remain healthy when phosphorus, a common fertilizer ingredient, flows off urban lawns and rural farms into the regional canal system and then into our region’s fragile wetlands.

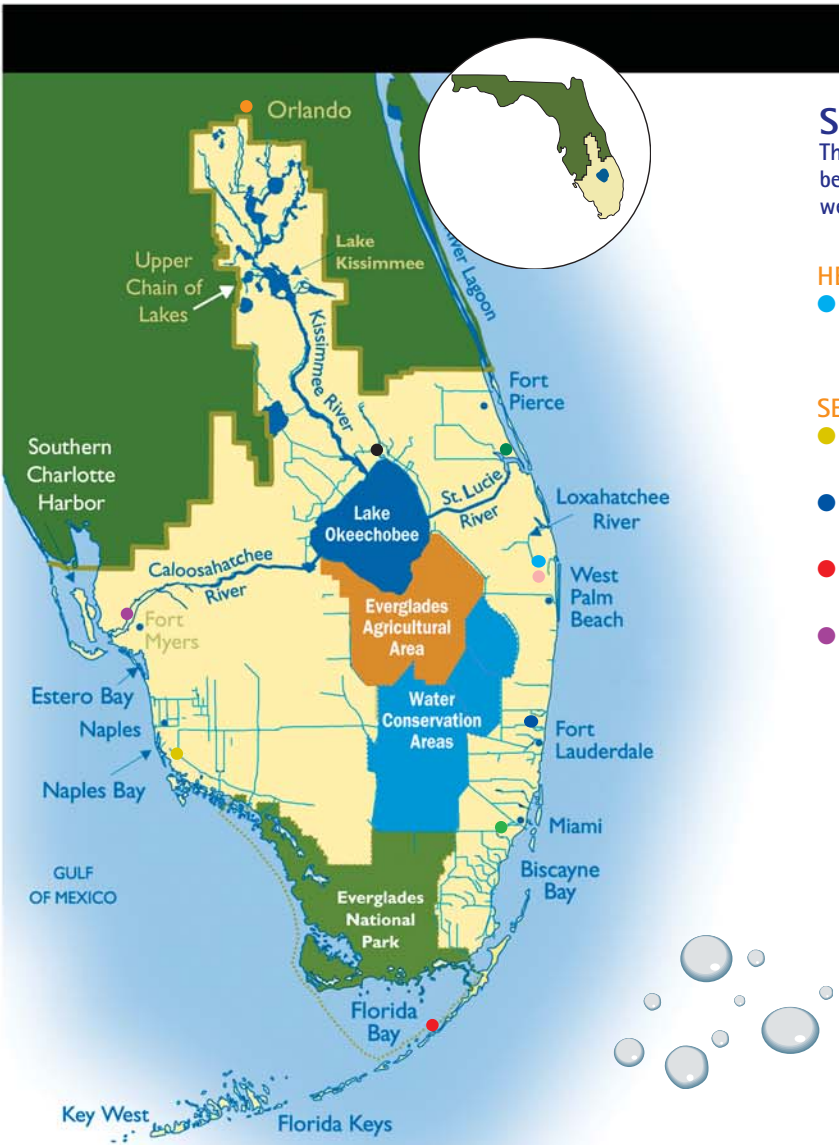
Florida is restoring and cleaning up the entire 2.4 million acre Everglades marsh. To reduce phosphorus, the South Florida Water Management District has built 35,000 acres of stormwater treatment areas (STAs) to cleanse water before it flows into natural areas. Another 18,000 acres of these constructed wetlands

are being built in Florida’s *Acceler8* projects, going beyond federal requirements to improve water quality.

In addition to the STAs, the state’s best management practices or “BMP” program is also helping to prevent phosphorus from reaching the Everglades through stormwater runoff. BMPs are improved ways of farming, ranching, landscaping, irrigating and managing animal waste – all with the goal of reducing environmental harm. Since 1994, BMPs and STAs together have prevented more than 2,200 tons of phosphorus from reaching the Everglades. You can do your part by using a low phosphorus fertilizer on your lawn to help prevent more pollution from entering the Everglades, rivers, lakes and estuaries.



American Alligator



Service Centers: Your Direct Link

The South Florida Water Management District's nine Service Centers are the critical links between the regional agency – headquartered in West Palm Beach – and the local communities we serve throughout our 16-county jurisdiction, highlighted in yellow on the map.

HEADQUARTERS

- West Palm Beach
(561) 686-8800 or
(800) 432-2045 (Florida Only)

SERVICE CENTERS

- Big Cypress Basin/Naples
(239) 597-1505
- Broward
(954) 713-3200
- Florida Keys (Plantation Key)
(305) 853-3219 or (800) 464-5067
- Lower West Coast (office in Fort Myers)
(239) 338-2929 or (800) 248-1201

- Martin/St. Lucie
(772) 223-2600 or (800) 250-4100
- Miami-Dade
(305) 377-7274 or (800) 250-4300
- Okeechobee
(863) 462-5260 or (800) 250-4200
- Orlando
(407) 858-6100 or (800) 250-4250
- Palm Beach County
(561) 682-2283

RAIN DRAIN

During the remainder of hurricane season, the South Florida Water Management District reminds you that flood control is a shared responsibility that starts in your neighborhood.

During and after a storm, we work in concert with city, county and local drainage district systems to safely convey excess water into regional storage areas or out to the ocean. In the case of a hurricane or storm, it is especially important that water moves quickly to reduce flooding levels. How can you help? Make sure your neighborhood drainage system is clear of debris and working properly. Contact us for a "Know the Flow" brochure at (800) 432-2045, ext. 6883 for tips on how to check your neighborhood drainage system.

WANT TO HEAR MORE?

It would be our pleasure to meet with your organization and answer your water management questions. If interested, please contact Jessica Morales at (800) 432-2045 or (561) 686-8800, ext. 6883.

YOUR GOVERNING BOARD MEMBERS

Appointed by the Governor, the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board sets policy and provides overall direction for the agency:

KEVIN McCARTY, *CHAIRMAN*
DELRAY BEACH

IRELA M. BAGUÉ, *VICE-CHAIR*
MIAMI

MIYA BURT-STEWART
HOLLYWOOD

ALICE J. CARLSON
NAPLES

MICHAEL COLLINS
ISLAMORADA

NICOLÁS GUTIÉRREZ, JR., ESQ.
MIAMI

LENNART E. LINDAHL, P.E.
PALM CITY

HARKLEY R. THORNTON
ORLANDO

MALCOLM S. WADE, JR.
CLEWISTON

PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

We can't protect our water resources and ecosystems alone. You can help by supporting our joint efforts.

FEDERAL
STATE
LOCAL

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. (904) 232-2234 or (800) 291-9405
U.S. Department of the Interior (202) 208-3100
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (202) 272-0167

South Florida Water Management District (see map above)
Florida Department of Environmental Protection (850) 245-2118
Florida Department of Community Affairs (850) 488-8466
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (850) 488-4676
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services . . (850) 488-3731

The South Florida Water Management District partners with local city and county governments, including water utility departments, as well as environmental, tribal, agricultural, business and community groups across our 16-county jurisdiction to implement ecosystem protection and restoration, enhance flood protection and protect water supplies. Check your telephone directory for a list of your local city or county offices, or contact your nearest Service Center for assistance



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